22: Guillemard T-2 (1882) 1886 Kamchadal

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country has any connection or not with the leprosy prevalent among them, it is difficult to say. Our informant described it as being a common disease, and he must have had considerable opportunities of judging, but it is remarkable that during our journey through the country we met with but one solitary case. Scurvy was, we were told, uncommon, owing no doubt to the abundance of the wild garlic and the *sarana*—a liliaceous plant whose bulb is stored for the winter, and supplies the place of the potato. This latter vegetable has, however, become much more extensively cultivated of late years.

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It was a matter of great regret to us that our acquaintance with Dr. Dybowski should of necessity have been so limited. He was on the eve of a long journey in search of fossils to the Kuril Lake, which lies in an almost unknown region at the southern extremity of the peninsula. It was by such pursuits alone that he was able to mitigate the loneliness of what was, in reality, an exile. During the winter he travelled over the country to such isolated spots of it as are inhabited, and saw his patients. These he was supposed to supply with such medicine as would suffice for their cure, or last them, should they be incurables, until the time of his visit in the following year! It is not every parish doctor whose district is spread over the extent of one hundred thousand square miles!

During the week that was necessary for the completion of our preparations we had abundant time for the exploration of Petropaulovsky and its surroundings. The numerous harbours and lovely scenery of Avatcha Bay would take a month to become thoroughly acquainted with, and it would be hard to imagine a more charming place for the naturalist and sportsman. Possibly, when the salmon rivers of Norway have reached a prohibitory price, and the game of India and South Africa has disappeared, some adventurous individual will recommend Kamschatka as a new field for sportsmen. At present, it must be confessed, it is not very easy to get there. Every year the port is visited by a

758 are doctors. Having refreshed myself, I proceeded
R to examine the hospitals and baths, all of which I
177 found in a disgraceful state of filthiness and decay.
. 75 There are two hospitals, one for the Kamtchatdales and a smaller one for the accommodation of the officers. There are also two baths, both ill contrived, and in want of every necessary and convenience which persons who have recourse to them require. The hospitals are without medicines, and the baths without flannel gowns, blankets, sheets, or towels; nor is there even a warm passage for the patient from the bath to the hospital; he must come from a place, where the atmosphere is equal to 25° of heat, and pass through a current of air where there may be 15° or 20° of frost. There never was a place where more could and ought to be, or where so little has been, done for the benefit of so wretched a people. The late chief doctor was five years in the command of this hospital, during which period he did nothing but keep his patients increasing in disease; indeed it may be considered a fortunate circumstance for the Kamtchatdales, that the governor was obliged to send him as surgeon of Captain Vassilieff's ship, in lieu of the proper surgeon who remained behind at sick quarters. Not even the most common vegetables have been raised; and but for a few cows, the benevolent present of Captain Rikord, the chief, I hardly know what there would be of the really useful for this establishment, which certainly owes

29:Cochrane T-2 (1821-22) 1824 Kamchadal

758 nothing either to the industry or humanity of the
R doctor before alluded to.

177 The state of some of those miserable creatures
.75 whom I saw in the hospital, was such as absolutely to prevent the doctor from dressing their wounds; of course I am incapable of describing them. They are allowed by the Emperor one pound of bread and half a pound of meat per day. They have also fish in abundance, and wild berries are to be found every where round the place. The patients, being all afflicted with one disease, are cramped up into one small space, never to go out but at their own desire, nor do any work, though they might raise an unlimited quantity of vegetables from the grounds covered with the warm vapour. In short, instead of being as it is, a place calculated to engender and nourish disease almost to pestilence, it might be, at a trifling expense and with proper care on the part of the head doctor, one of the most humane and efficient establishments on the face of the globe.

312 With respect to the nature and quality of the baths, they had a strong smell of sulphur, and an unpleasant taste. The hot and cold springs are united at the baths, and it is a strange circumstance, that the one should always be boiling hot in 25° of frost, while the other at 30° of heat is always below the freezing point. These were the only remarks my short stay, in the month of December, could enable me to make. I should, how-

29:Cochrane T-2 (1821-22)1824 Kamchadal

I should how-
758 ever, in justice observe, that the present head doc-
R tor, if it be Mr. Gramatin, who was my shipmate in
177 the transport from Okotsk, is a man of great talents,
.75 perseverance, and industry; and had, previous to my leaving the Peninsula, seven months after my arrival and visit to the hospital, cleared the place of three-fourths of the patients, and sent them to their homes quite cured. He had no remedy but surgical operations, and succeeded in first putting the patient to sleep, and then cutting out all the afflicted parts. To the truth of this statement, extraordinary as it will doubtles appear in Russia, I beg leave to add the attestation of Dr. Zaerzerfskey, who was with me at the hospital at the time to which I allude.

000 My route from Malka to St. Peter and St. Paul's was over a highly picturesque valley, and in beautiful weather. I soon reached Nachikin and Koraki, and, changing dogs, proceeded very pleasantly till midnight damped our satisfaction a little with a fall of snow. We halted to refresh the dogs, and lay down till the peep of dawn enabled us to proceed, and we reached Avatcha by noon. But no dogs were to be procured there except three which carried my little baggage; I therefore proceeded on foot, and reached the haven at about three o'clock. My entry, alone and unperceived, was widely different from my departure:—my sensations were correspondent. In melancholy mood, leaving my betrothed for the sake of wandering

29:Cochrane T-2(1821-22)1824 Kamchadal

231 R 177 .23 ple, were they once imported upon a large scale. The dogs, like the aborigines, are on the decline, and probably twenty or thirty years more will leave nothing in Kamtchatka but the Russians and animals of the chase. When it is recollected that Kamtchatka has such magnificent and extensive meadows, and that the climate is not severe; and when it is considered with what facility government might send each year two or three hundred head of young cattle by the annual transports to Tygil, it may be naturally supposed that the different chiefs have been attending more to their personal concerns than to those of the peninsula. That the place might be made even to flourish, there can be no reasonable doubt.

651 R 177 .65 The expenses of the colony have been very great to Russia, and must continue so, as long as the present plan is persisted in. The yasack amounts to a less sum of money than the single maintenance of a chief. Five hundred heads of foxes or sables, worth six thousand roubles, or three hundred pounds, is the amount; while the expences of the colony cannot fall short of two hundred thousand roubles, or ten thousand pounds.

164 758 R 177 .75 The depopulated state of this peninsula is also to be attributed to other causes. Their continual wars and insurrections greatly thinned them, and these were followed by the introduction of the small-pox, which in the year 1768, carried off no less than six thousand persons; and twenty thousand are sup-

29:Cochrane T-2 (1821-22)1824 Kamchadal

posed to have fallen victims to it within a short period. Yet at this moment there is a want of vaccinating matter, nor is it a questionable assertion that the quality of medicines in the hospitals is shamefully adulterated, and the quantity small. The present worthy chief has however caused an inquiry to be made upon this subject, and the result has been transmitted to government. But it is not the small pox alone, that the arrival of the Russians introduced into this place; the distemper before alluded to has made, and continues to make, most dreadful ravages in every part of the peninsula, very few families being free from the taint, and no part of the world can show more miserable objects of its fury. The whole race indeed look like beings better qualified to extinguish than propagate the human species; nor is this surprising, considering their present state, almost without hospitals, medicines, or attendants, save that ill-managed house at Malka.

Besides these two diseases, the inhabitants of Kamtchatka are subject to all those which make havoc in countries where the people are ordinarily ill fed, ill clothed, and liable to famine. The last has frequently visited this Peninsula, more from a want of people than of food; for fish is not always to be had upon both sides of the Peninsula at the same time, and they have not the means of transporting the superabundant quantity to the opposite coast.